



NEWS

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Dear friends,

I hope you all had a wonderful holiday and ready to welcome a new working year 2006.

Fulbright Program closed the year 2005 with some busy events left. Fulbright Enrichment Seminar held in Danang in early December was a great opportunity for U.S. Student grantees and U.S. Scholar grantees to discuss their research progress, their accomplishment and to share the difficulties, the challenges they faced during their time here in Vietnam. After the annual deadline of October 15, Vietnamese scholar applications came in preliminary round of the assessment process and the Peer Review Panel convened in Ho Chi Minh City (HCMC) at the end of December to identify each candidate, leading to a shortlist for the next round.

February will kick off a new competition for Vietnamese Student Program in the 2007-2008 academic year. Now we are hosting information sessions in Hanoi, Danang, Hue, HCMC, and other locations throughout Vietnam. If you have any qualified candidates in mind for the program, please inform them of the deadline of February 24, 2006. Potential candidates of Student Program should be interested in a selection process change this year. Unlike the previous Fellowship Competition in which the selection was done in the U.S., the selection for this academic year will first be done in Vietnam with the assistance of the current U.S. senior scholars in Vietnam.

Last but not least in February, we will host the Spring Orientation held in HCMC. This two-day orientation includes briefings on current political, economic, educational, etc, issues of Vietnam to acquaint U.S. grantees with Vietnamese culture, people and society.

On the occasion of the New Year, I wish you all a wonderful Tet and a fulfilling, prosperous, happy new year.

Best regards,

Tran Xuan Thao
Director

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Fulbright News

Fulbright Enrichment Seminar

For the 2005- 2006 academic year, a Fulbright Enrichment Seminar for U.S. grantees was held in Danang on December 7 and 8, 2005. This two-day seminar was a great opportunity for the U.S. grantees to meet and discuss their lecturing or research plans. They not only shared the accomplishments, developed new relationship with their host but also discussed the challenges they faced with during their time here in Vietnam. For the U.S. grantees, this was a good time to share things of common interest with their Vietnamese counterparts.

Peer Review Panel for Vietnamese Scholar Program

A Peer Review Panel met in HCMC late last December for the preliminary round of assessment of candidates for the Vietnamese scholar program for the 2006- 2007 academic year. The goal of the panel session was to identify, on the basis of defined criteria, the most highly competitive candidates for consideration. To define the candidates' suitability as potential for the Fulbright Program, the panel reviewed each candidate's academic credentials, his/her research proposals, and decided whether the candidate's proposed research topic or methodology would contribute significantly to the academic and research field in Vietnam. Candidates who were recommended for the interview met the following requirements:

- Does the candidate have significant academic credentials to achieve the proposed project? This means that Fulbright scholars are distinguished by their academic prominence and must pose as potential key personnel in their academic field in Vietnam.
- Is the candidate's research proposal achievable? The Visiting Fulbright Scholar Program grants lasts up to one academic year. Under the time constraint, the candidate's research proposal must be feasible in term of breadth and scope.
- Does the candidate's proposed research topic or methodology contribute significantly to the academic and research field in Vietnam? A candidate's research topic or methodology should be creative enough to advance work in his/her field.

Fulbright Feature

Ms. Bui Thi Thanh Tam is a U.S. Fulbright fellow researching the role of Overseas Vietnamese in the development of Vietnam's Information Technology (IT) sector. She graduated from the University of California at Berkeley with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Political Economy and plans to go to law school. Tam hopes to use her law degree and Fulbright experience to serve as a facilitator of trade between the U.S. and Vietnam.

Like most people in Ho Chi Minh City, my day usually starts at 6:00 am. Walking the same route to the gym - down Le Thanh Ton, right on Hai Ba Trung, and left on Le Duan - I always notice something different along my path: a new electronics store, a renovated office building, a freshly painted crosswalk at a street intersection. Day by day, these changes constantly remind me how fast Vietnam is growing and developing.

After my morning workout, I head to my internship at the law firm of Baker & McKenzie. As part of my research on the role of Overseas Vietnamese in the development of Vietnam's IT sector, I want to analyze how Vietnam's legal environment influences the degree of investment by Overseas Vietnamese. Working at Baker & McKenzie and editing legal documents, investigating intellectual property cases, and researching issues such as the W.T.O and B.T.A. has provided me with invaluable insight into Vietnam's changing legal system. It is exciting to witness firsthand Vietnam's rapid integration into the international community.

A majority of the local attorneys in my office are female in their late twenties. While we had different upbringings, our shared experiences as Vietnamese women immediately bonded us. Inside and outside the office, they have gone out of their way to enrich my experience in Vietnam by teaching me things about the Vietnamese language, culture, and society. At the same time, they are willing and eager to learn about my experience as a Vietnamese-American. Through our conversations, I realize that we have more in common than I expected, as we often hold similar views on issues such as relationships, family, and gender roles. More importantly, we share the same desire to help Vietnam move forward and become a competitive player in the global economy.



My afternoons are spent meeting and working with Overseas Vietnamese doing IT-related business in Vietnam. In the past few months I have befriended a group of remarkable entrepreneurs who are using the knowledge, experience, and education they received in the U.S. to develop Vietnam's emerging IT sector. Most left Vietnam at a young age and came back because they felt a sense of duty to help their home country. With a genuine desire to contribute, they all recognize their unique role in linking technology, human capital, and resources between the U.S. and Vietnam.

With a young, talented, and eager labor force, Vietnam today is an emerging market advancing into the international arena. As a Vietnamese-American, I want to use my knowledge in language and cultural issues to create mutually beneficial economic and trade opportunities for the U.S. and Vietnam. The Fulbright fellowship is giving me the chance to gain the contacts and experience necessary to build bridges and create stronger ties between both countries. I am grateful for all that I have learned and seen in the last few months in Vietnam as a Fulbright fellow and look forward to many more experiences to come.

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<http://vietnam.usembassy.gov/www.hfbvn.html>

Fulbright updates

Spring Orientation for U.S. grantees

For the 2005- 2006 academic year, Spring Orientation will be held in HCMC on February 9 and 10, 2006. U.S. grantees will be welcomed by Mr. Louis Lantner, Counselor for Public Affairs, U.S. Embassy in Hanoi. On the first day, they will be briefed on the banking, legal systems, and the higher education system in Vietnam by speakers who are Vietnamese scholars and students. New arrivals will also join a briefing session on Fulbright Program, Vietnamese hosts, and cultural adaptation, hosted by Dr. Tran Xuan Thao, Director of Fulbright Program in Vietnam. During the second day, all the grantees will experience a fantastic chance to acquaint themselves with Vietnamese culture, people and society by taking part in an excursion to Ben Tre, a province in the Mekong Delta.

The 2007 Fulbright Fellowship competition

The first round of competition has started at the announcement in late December 2005. All promising young and in-service professionals regardless of race, religion, origin, or gender are eligible. In conjunction with the announcement, information briefings are held in Hanoi, Danang, Hue, HCMC and other locations throughout Vietnam. Unlike the previous Fellowship Competition in which the selection was done in the U.S., the selection for this academic year will first be done in Vietnam with the assistance of the current U.S. senior scholars in Vietnam. The selection process, therefore, will take less time and be less costly.

From you:

Have you moved recently? Please write your new contact details here and fax or email to PAS - Hanoi: (04) 831-4601 or fulbrightvn@fpt.vn.

New Address: _____

New telephone: _____

New fax: _____

New E-mail: _____

Fulbright Story

Nguyen thi Hong Dao won the Fulbright grant in AY 2003-2004. She has completed her program in the U.S. and has been back to her home university in AnGiang

Before flying to Boston College for a two-year academic study, I stayed at Kansas University, Lawrence for a six-week pre-academic program. It was great time for me with lots of wonderful feelings that I should not keep only for myself.

I arrived in Kansas City after long and tiring, yet "full-fed" flights amounting to a total of 21 hours. Mr. and Mrs. Tom picked me up at Kansas International airport and took me to Naismith Residential Hall at Kansas University (K.U.). I was so and surprised at the warm welcome I received from the Fulbrighters of previous years, who have been studying at K.U. They were very friendly and helpful, and made me feel that I was at home.

The first three days at KU were really hard because I faced a lot of challenges: jet lag, time-zone difference, food change, and a heavy schedule with mountains of assignments. I didn't even have enough time to sleep. All I had to do was learn, observe, and read. Walking was also another challenge. Every morning I had to go uphill to my classroom for about 20 minutes, which was not really enjoyable. But, I came to realize that we, Vietnamese, should develop this good habit. Morning walks gave me a chance to observe and enjoy my new beautiful surroundings. I could also see the way students dressed and what traffic rules on campus were. For the first time, I saw vehicles stop for a pedestrian to cross the street.

My class consisted of 30 graduate students who all are Fulbrighters and came from every corner of the world: Africa, Europe, Asia, and South America. It was very interesting getting to know a variety of cultures and the different ways people spoke English. All of my classmates took the program seriously. We didn't waste time chatting except during meals. Everyone wanted to prove that they had their own ideas and identities. The atmosphere in class was always very active. Most of us took our homework along even when we were doing the laundry, having meals, going on field trips, or going to a concert. I felt quite confident because I had Ms. Lisa, a faculty member of Education School as my faculty mentor, and Mr. Massissou, graduate student for Ph.D. in Higher Education as my peer mentor. They were willing to help me dealing with all my questions from academic to daily life issues.

The six-week pre-academic program must have been designed to provide us with pathways to American diversified culture and lifestyle. From all what I saw and learned here, I came to understand how considerate the Fulbright Program was as to allocate me to the Midwest of the U.S. It was a wonderful time for me to learn to adapt myself to the new environment before starting my study at Boston College.

I am grateful to the Fulbright Program - a bridge of culture and mutual understanding - for such invaluable and unforgettable experience.